

VZCZCXRO0970  
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH  
DE RUEHKO #2199/01 2650119

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 220119Z SEP 09

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6311

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY

RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J5//

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI

RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//

RHMFIUU/USFJ //J5/J021//

RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA

RUAYJAA/CTF 72

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 8884

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6545

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 0360

RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 3884

RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 7062

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1048

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7707

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7315

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 11 TOKYO 002199

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;  
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;  
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,  
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA  
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;  
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAQ](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/22/09

Index:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule (Nikkei)

The Bilateral Relationship

- 4) Campbell tells Okada the investigation into the secret accord will not affect relations (Asahi)
- 5) Gist of interview with Assistant Secretary of State Campbell (Asahi)
- 6) The genesis of the difference in interpretations; U.S. interpreted prior consultation for port calls and passage as unnecessary (Asahi)
- 7) Foreign Minister Okada arrives in U.S. (Nikkei)
- 8) Hatoyama diplomacy starts with meetings with U.S., Russian, Chinese, and Korean leaders (Yomiuri)
- 9) Prime Minister leaves for U.S. (Nikkei)
- 10) Hatoyama plans alternative contribution to Afghanistan by November (Asahi)
- 11) U.S. Govt. prepared for discussions; Sticking points include alternative to refueling mission (Sankei)
- 12) Okada says no to dispatch of SDF to Afghanistan (Tokyo Shimbun)
  
- 13) U.S. asks Japan provide other aid in case it ends refueling mission (Yomiuri)

Foreign Relations

- 14) State Minister for Abduction Nakai vows to increase pressure on North (Sankei)

Defense & Security

- 15) PM Hatoyama to give speech on 25 PERCENT emission reduction

target at UN (Yomiuri)

**Politics**

16) Ozawa says he would like to see a bill granting local suffrage for permanent foreign residents introduced at regular Diet session (Sankei)

**Opinion**

17) Sankei-FNN poll: 68.7 PERCENT support Hatoyama cabinet (Sankei)

18) Women boost support for DPJ (Sankei)

**Articles:**

**1) TOP HEADLINES**

**Asahi:**

Health ministry to keep 53 social insurance hospitals in place: Switch from policy to sell them

**Mainichi:**

Unaccounted protection expenses for low-priced accommodation facilities worth 250 million yen

**Yomiuri & Tokyo Shimbun:**

Termination of Yamba Dam project to be put on hold: Land minister gives priority to gaining understanding from local residents

**Nikkei:**

JAL's main banks call for separation of good businesses from bad

TOKYO 00002199 002 OF 011

ones: Special legislation also sought

**Sankei:**

Review of US Forces Japan realignment: U.S. government ready for talks

**Akahata:**

International petition drive for nuclear-free world: Sends photos of atomic bombings to world

**2) EDITORIALS**

**Asahi:**

(1) Rebuilding of JAL: New administration aiming for last opportunity  
(2) 50th anniversary of Isewan Typhoon: Are people are becoming less wary of danger of natural disasters?

**Mainichi:**

(1) Climate change summit: Expectations on U.S. displaying leadership  
(2) Challenges to Hatoyama administration - Provisional gas tax rate; Come up with comprehensive measures

**Yomiuri:**

(1) Hatoyama's economic measures: Show path to stable growth

**Nikkei:**

(1) Proactive participation in creating international accounting system urged

**Sankei:**

(1) Prime minister's U.S. visit: Reviewing election pledges to firmly maintain alliance urged  
(2) Relocation of Osaka municipality office: Governor should come up with convincing explanations

**Tokyo Shimbun:**

(1) Order for the Acts of Virtuous Government: Being indiscreet will worsen situation  
(2) Fall in benchmark land values: Adverse effect on economy, but...

**Akahata:**

(1) U.S. Forces Japan realignment: Promote campaign under new conditions

30 Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 18 &19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

September 19

The 18th

09:01 Attended a ministerial meeting on the supplementary budget at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). Later attended a regular ministerial meeting, followed by a meeting with Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Nagatsuma and Social Insurance Agency Director General Watanabe.

10:34 Met Italian President Napolitano.

11:15 Met State Minister for Abduction Issue Nakai, with Chief

TOKYO 00002199 003 OF 011

Cabinet Secretary Hirano.

11:30 Met Masami Tanabu, secretary general of the parliamentary group to promote invitation of the 2016 Olympic Games to Japan.

12:29 Instructed the vice ministers of government agencies to suspend their regular press conferences.

13:13 Attended a Lower House plenary session.

13:25 Attended an unveiling ceremony of the signboards of the national strategy office and the administrative reform conference office in the Cabinet Office, with State Minister for National Strategy Bureau Kan and State Minister for Administrative Reform Sengoku present.

13:30 Arrived at the Diet Building.

14:00 Attended the opening ceremony of a special committee at the Upper House.

14:20 Arrived at the Kantei.

15:12 Returned to the Lower House plenary session.

15:21 Arrived at the Kantei.

17:55 Arrived at the Imperial Palace to report to the Emperor in private. Attended a ceremony to formally appoint the new vice ministers.

20:29 Met Upper House member Yataro Tsuda at the Kantei. Later, attended a vice ministerial meeting.

21:36 Issued official appointments to parliamentary officials.

Attended a meeting of parliamentary officials.

22:07 Met Deputy Foreign Minister Otabe and Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs Tamaki, followed by Deputy Foreign Minister Sasae.

Sept. 19

00:02 Arrived at his private residence.

Prime 20:29 Minister's schedule, September 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

Remained at his home in Denenchofu in the morning.

13:28 Arrived at a department store in Tamagawa to shop with his wife.

14:06 Arrived home.

Prime Minister's schedule, September 20

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

September 21, 2009

Remained at his private residence in the morning.

12:10 Went shopping at a confectionary in Tamagawa Denenchofu with his wife. Returned to his private residence.

14:43 Arrived at the Kantei.

15:31 Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano, Foreign Minister Okada, Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka and others.

17:32 Met Environment Minister Ozawa.

18:07 Attended a ministerial meeting on global warming.

19:44 Dined at a sushi bar at Jingumae with his wife, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno, and his wife.

22:40 Arrived at his private residence.

Prime Minister's schedule, September 21

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 22, 2009

10:07 Met Deputy Foreign Minister Sasae and others, with Hirano and  
TOKYO 00002199 004 OF 011

Matsuno.

12:14 Met former professional baseball player Masumi Kuwata, with his wife Miyuki.

14:34 Met Finance Minister Fujii, METI Minister Naoshima, and Financial Affairs Minister Kamei. Joined by Environment Minister Ozawa. Fujii and Naoshima stayed behind.

17:40 Met Hirano at Hatoyama's home. Joined by Matsuno.

19:23 Left Haneda Airport by government plane for the U.S. with his wife to attend the UN General Assembly and other meetings.

4) FM Okada tells U.S. Assistant Secretary of State: Secret nuclear deal investigation to have "no impact" on U.S.

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 19, 2009

Makoto Igarashi

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada met U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 18 and told him that investigation had started on the secret agreement between the two governments on bringing nuclear arms into Japan. He explained that, "I do not think that this will have any negative impact on the U.S." and sought the U.S. side's understanding. Campbell responded that, "This will not affect Japan-U.S. relations from now on," indicating that he did not see this as a problem.

Campbell said at a news conference held after the meeting: "I made it clear that we will also cooperate in resolving these issues." He also stated that: "I am aware that this is a hot topic in Japan, but documents have been made public (in the U.S.) before. I think the history has been clarified." He thus indicated that the facts relating to the secret agreement have all been made public. He gave more emphasis to expectations on Japan regarding discussions about (the United States') provision of defense for Japan, including the nuclear umbrella, and in relation to making progress in Japan's contribution to the realization of President Obama's goal of a "world without nuclear weapons" and other areas.

Regarding the possibility of President Obama visiting Hiroshima during his trip to Japan in mid-November, Campbell said that "there is no such plan at this point."

5) Gist of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Campbell's interview

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
September 19, 2009

Yoichi Kato, editorial staff member

Following is the gist of the interview given to Asahi Shimbun on September 18 by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, who is visiting Japan.

U.S. view of the Hatoyama administration

Mistaken information on the U.S. view of the Hatoyama administration is being circulated. First, the U.S. also welcomes an "equal" partnership. It is also wrong to think that the U.S. does not support Japan's independent foreign policy. Nothing can be farther from the truth than the idea that the U.S. opposes stronger

TOKYO 00002199 005 OF 011

relations between Japan and South Korea and China.

Japan and the U.S. are facing many problems, including Afghanistan, global warming, North Korea, and economic stagnation. I hope the new administration understands that the U.S. wants to build as close a relationship as possible.

#### Futenma relocation

The U.S. government strongly desires that what has been agreed with the Japanese government will continue to be implemented. However, if we give orders and impose our conclusions on Japan at the initial stage (of building the bilateral relationship), we will damage the "equal and strong partnership" that we are trying to build. We understand that the new administration in Japan wants to talk about (this issue). It is our duty as a partner to meet this demand. I have come for that purpose.

#### Refueling mission in the Indian Ocean

We are facing a critical stage (in Afghanistan and Pakistan) right now. We will welcome in particular any form of assistance from Japan in the future.

#### Global warming prevention

I think (Prime Minister Hatoyama's proposal on the mid-term target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from the 1990 level) is a bold, creative, and resolute proposal. We welcome this on a global level. However, what will happen to this proposal ultimately in the negotiations (for an international framework) is a different matter.

6) Secret nuclear deal originated from different interpretations of "prior consultation system"; U.S. understanding was that consultation was not required for port calls and passage

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)  
September 21, 2009

Masaru Honda

Testimonies by informed sources have revealed what brought about the "secret nuclear agreement" that allowed U.S. ships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons to call on Japanese ports and pass through Japanese waters. Under the "prior consultation system" that started after the revision of the bilateral security treaty in 1960, at first, it was Japan's understanding that port calls and passage through Japanese waters also required consultation, but the United States' interpretation was that consultation was not required. Later, the Japanese government secretly conformed to the U.S. interpretation and tacitly allowed port calls and passage. The principle of not introducing nuclear arms, one of the three non-nuclear principles (of 1967), had been meaningless from the beginning.

Even after the Japanese government confirmed the change of interpretation with the U.S. side, it continued to repeat the same old line in the Diet, fully aware that this was not the truth. Later, there were several instances where proposals emerged in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to openly allow port calls and passage of ships carrying nuclear arms, but each time, the proposals

TOKYO 00002199 006 OF 011

were killed because "this might cause the collapse of the cabinet."

Six former senior MOFA officials who were in a position to be involved with the secret nuclear agreement gave their testimonies to Asahi Shimbun on how the secret agreement came about. A number of these former officials said that they had briefed incumbent MOFA officials in detail this summer.

According to their testimonies, the "secret nuclear agreement" came about in the following manner: (1) the Japanese side resolved the "difference in interpretation" by conforming to the U.S. interpretation; (2) therefore, port calls and passage by ships carrying nuclear arms continued; and (3) the Japanese government continued to hide this fact from the people.

7) Foreign Minister Okada arrives in U.S.

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 22, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada arrived in New York at noon on Sept. 21 (early in the morning on Sept. 22, Japan time) via a Japan Airlines flight from Narita Airport. He will attend the Group of Eight (G-8) foreign ministerial meeting. He is scheduled to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the afternoon of Sept. 21. He will return to Japan on the 26th.

8) Prime Minister Hatoyama to meet for first time with top leaders of U.S., Russia, China and South Korea

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
September 22, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama left yesterday evening for New York from Haneda Airport via a government plane. This U.S. visit is his first diplomatic event as prime minister. He will attend the United Nations General Assembly and the G20 financial summit. He will meet with U.S. President Barack Obama on Sept. 23, just a week after taking office. He intends to place priority on building a personal relationship of trust with Obama and express his intention to place importance on the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Hatoyama is scheduled to stay in the United States for six days. Prior to his departure, he told the press corps at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), "I just want to be myself and try not to be too tense." Asked by reporters about his first meeting with Obama, Hatoyama indicated his intention to make an effort to build a relationship of trust with Obama. He said, "At first I want to build a relationship with him in which I make efforts to understand the personality of the President and he makes efforts to understand my personality, as well. I will deal with pending issues while building a relationship of trust between us."

Hatoyama, who has advocated the need for "a close and equal Japan-U.S. relationship," has said that his administration will suspend Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean next year, as well as review the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan. However, he has no intention to delve into the specifics of these issues during the planned Japan-U.S. summit. It is believed that Obama will not take up specific issues at his first meeting with Hatoyama.

9) Prime Minister Hatoyama departs for U.S.

TOKYO 00002199 007 OF 011

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 22, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama left Haneda Airport on a government plane yesterday for the United States to attend the United Nations General Assembly and the G-20 summit (Pittsburgh Summit). He intends to tell U.S. President Barack Obama in their first meeting that he will make an effort to build a future-oriented Japan-U.S. alliance. He also plans to build a relationship of trust with the leaders of other countries and he will then play up Japan's anti-global warming efforts, nuclear nonproliferation, and nuclear disarmament.

Hatoyama told reporters yesterday at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), "What is the most important for me as the Japanese prime minister is to obtain trust from other countries." Referring to the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces of Agreement (SOFA), he said:

"I have no intention to change my view although the issues have to be resolved in the future as a matter of course. I will draw conclusions in our relationship of trust."

10) Prime minister to map out alternative aid plan for Afghanistan by November

As an alternative measure in the event of Japan ending the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has decided to map out basic guidelines for supporting Afghanistan, based on private-sector assistance, by the time when U.S. President Obama visits Japan for the first time in mid-November. The Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) and the Foreign Ministry have started looking into an alternative plan.

The prime minister will leave for the U.S. on the 21st to deliver a speech at the UN General Assembly and attend the G-20 (financial summit). He is slated to hold his first meeting with Obama on the 23rd. The likelihood is that he will give top priority to building a relationship of trust with the President. Individual pending issues will unlikely be taken up. However, the prime minister has judged that Japan would need to present its policy on Afghan assistance at the second summit to be held in November.

11) US government is "ready to hold talks" on review of realignment of U.S. bases in Japan

SANKEI (Top play) (Excerpts)  
September 22, 2009

The Japanese government has been unofficially informed by the U.S. government that it is "ready to hold talks if there is a formal proposal from the Japanese side" on a review of the realignment of U.S. bases in Japan, including the planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, it was learned on Sept. 21. The U.S. government has asked Japan to adhere to what had been agreed upon between the two countries on the realignment of U.S. bases in Japan, but the Hatoyama administration has come up with a policy to review the U.S. force realignment plan. Given the situation, Washington apparently decided that it would be

TOKYO 00002199 008 OF 011

advisable to rebuild Japan-U.S. relations in compliance with the wishes of the new Japanese administration.

According to a source close to Japan-U.S. relations, Tokyo learned of the U.S. government's intention from Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and others who were visiting Japan on Sept. 17-19. During his stay in Japan, Campbell held talks with Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Administrative Vice-Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka, and others.

During the series of talks, Campbell said: "The United States and Japan are allies. We can discuss anything. The issue of U.S. force realignment is no exception.... We are aware that the new Japanese government wants to hold talks on what was agreed upon between the two countries in the past. It is important for us to listen to the views of the new administration." Furthermore, Campbell reportedly expressed his intention to respond to a call for talks if Japan makes a formal proposal, saying, "If there is a proposal from Japan, the United States has an obligation as an ally to come to the negotiating table."

12) Okada rules out dispatch of troops to Afghanistan

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
September 21, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, appearing on a TV Asahi program aired yesterday, indicated that it would be difficult to send the Self-Defense Forces to Afghanistan when asked about the option of conducting humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in that country as an alternative to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. "The security situation is quite difficult there," Okada said. "Other countries are also exploring ways to withdraw (their troops)," he also said. "As it stands," he added, "it's unlikely that we will suddenly send out the SDF since they would be beginners."

Meanwhile, Okada also indicated a cautious view about the idea of

expanding civilian assistance. "We can only send civilians to secure places," Okada said, adding, "Money may become our main contribution."

13) U.S. asks Japan to come up with alternative plan for Afghan aid before Obama's Japan visit in November if it is to terminate refueling mission

YOMIURI (Top play) (Lead paragraph)  
September 19, 2009

The U.S. government has asked Japan to come up with a new form of support for Afghanistan replacing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean before President Barack Obama's visit to Japan planned for mid-November if the Hatoyama administration formally decides to terminate the refueling mission, a Japan-U.S. relations source revealed on Sept. 18.

14) National Public Safety Commission chief Nakai stresses need to continue pressuring North Korea to resolve abduction issue

SANKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
September 21, 2009

TOKYO 00002199 009 OF 011

In an interview with the Sankei Shimbun, Hiroshi Nakai, National Public Safety Commission chairman and state minister for abduction issue, said "I will start with strengthening pressure" on North Korea in an effort to resolve the issue of its past abductions of Japanese nationals. Nakai also said he had advised Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama just before Hatoyama left for the U.S. to "tell U.S. President Barack Obama during their meeting that Japan will not move toward normalizing relations with North Korea before the abduction issue is resolved."

Regarding the approach Japan should take to settle the abduction issue, Nakai declared: "Japan will ratchet up pressure (against North Korea). There is no other means but this approach." He further indicated that he would continue to convey Japan's clear stance toward the international community, remarking: "It is necessary for Japan to continue to assert to the international community, mainly to the U.S. and South Korea, that Japan will not agree to any requests as long as the abduction issue is left unresolved."

Nakai also said: "If he delivers a speech (at the UN General Assembly) in New York, Prime Minister Hatoyama should at least say, 'Suppose Americans were being abducted by agents from Cuba every year. That is what the abduction issue is like. How can we just leave the issue unresolved?' He indicated that Hatoyama should stress the inhumanity of abductions to the world in his UN speech.

15) Hatoyama ready to declare 25 PERCENT cut in greenhouse gas emissions in UN speech

YOMIURI (Top Play) (Excerpts)  
September 21, 2009

During the first meeting of the ministerial committee on global warming at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday, the government decided on the content of the speech Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama will deliver in the upcoming UN summit on climate change in New York on Sept. 22. Hatoyama will declare Japan's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 PERCENT from 1990 levels by 2020. He will also propose a new initiative to provide developing countries with Japan's energy-conservation technology and funds in a proactive manner.

The Aso government announced in June the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 15 PERCENT from 2005 levels, or by 8 PERCENT from 1990 levels. By coming up with a larger reduction amount than the goal of the previous government and positive support measures for developing countries, the new Japanese government aims to take the initiative in negotiations for creating an international framework for cutting greenhouse gas emissions after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2013.

Participating in the ministerial meeting held last night were eight ministers, including the prime minister, State Minister for National Strategy Bureau Naoto Kan, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, and Environment Minister Ozawa. The participants agreed that the prime minister should send a powerful message to the international community. In the meeting, Hatoyama said, "The most important thing is that all countries around the world work together (on measures to fight global warming)."

Hatoyama expressed his intention to try to achieve a 25 PERCENT reduction in greenhouse gas emissions even before coming into office

TOKYO 00002199 010 OF 011

as prime minister. By declaring it at an international conference, he intends to make it an international pledge. To avoid a situation in which Japan alone is obligated to achieve this outstanding target, Hatoyama will also say in his speech that the 25 PERCENT target is based on the premise that all the major emitters of greenhouse gases, including the U.S. and China, will participate in efforts to attain the target. He is also planning to reiterate the need to build an international framework that is fair and effective.

16) Local suffrage for permanent foreign residents: Ozawa refers to possible submission of bill to regular Diet session; Some party members against plan

SANKEI (Top play) (Lead para.)  
September 20, 2009

It has been learned that Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa on Sept. 19 met with Lee Sang Tuk, a South Korean lawmaker of the Grand National Party, who is the president of the South Korea-Japan parliamentarian league and the elder brother of South Korean President Lee Myung Bak, and told him that "something must be done" about the question of whether foreign nationals with permanent resident status in Japan should be vested with the right to vote in local elections. "I want to set a direction on the matter in the regular Diet session," a DPJ source quoted Ozawa as saying. Ozawa appeared to have indicated his intention to aim to submit a bill to the regular Diet session to be convened in January next year. Prime Minister Hatoyama is also known as being eager to promote the idea. However, since many DPJ members are opposing the idea, the DPJ will likely face difficulties in unifying views among its lawmakers. As some have pointed out that this issue could infringe on the Constitution, it could become a major bone of contention in the run-up to the Upper House election next summer.

17) Poll: Hatoyama cabinet gets 68.7 PERCENT support

SANKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
September 19, 2009

The initial public approval rating for Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his cabinet reached 68.7 PERCENT in a joint public opinion survey conducted by the Sankei Shimbun and Fuji News Network (FNN) on Sept. 16-17. The figure is way above the 44.6 PERCENT rating the Aso cabinet got for it upon its inauguration. The Hatoyama cabinet made its debut with the third highest inaugural popularity rating among its 11 predecessors since Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's cabinet that came into office in 1993 as a non-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) coalition government.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties as well, the now-ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) scored 44.4 PERCENT, topping 40 PERCENT for the first time. The LDP was at 18.8 PERCENT. The support rate for the DPJ is more than twice as high as that for the LDP.

18) Poll: DPJ propped up by popularity with women

SANKEI (Page 2 (Abridged))  
September 19, 2009

Upon its debut, the Hatoyama cabinet's public approval rating neared 70 PERCENT . The rate of public support for the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) appears to reflect the high popularity of Prime Minister Hatoyama and his cabinet. In the meantime, the DPJ's support rate also hit an all-time high for it. The DPJ seems to have a 'pole position' toward next summer's election for the House of Councillors. "I'm very grateful," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano told a press conference yesterday. "But," Hirano also said, "the question you may have would be whether the Hatoyama cabinet is really going to do politics for the people's sake." He added: "Each and every one of the cabinet ministers must bear this in mind. In a sense, this figure makes me feel a very heavy responsibility."

The DPJ has now expanded its strength in the Diet. This seems to be ascribable in part to the expansion of support for the DPJ among women.

In a survey conducted in September last year, the DPJ's popularity rating was 31.6 PERCENT among male respondents and 20.5 PERCENT among female respondents. As seen from these figures, there was a wide gender gap. This time around, the DPJ's popularity rating was 46.8 PERCENT among male respondents and 42.2 PERCENT among female respondents. The rate of public support for the DPJ among men is higher than that among women. Even so, the gender gap has narrowed.

ROOS